

Turtle Valley Wildlife Area SWG Performance Report –6/30/04-2/21/05

Wetland and grassland restoration has been taking place on over 2,200 acres that were purchased in partnership with the USDA-Wetland Reserve Program. Restoration efforts focus on returning both hydrology and vegetation to a natural state and improving wildlife habitat in an intensively farmed area. Some of the wildlife species that are benefiting from the wetland restoration work are: sandhill crane; northern harrier; great blue heron; great egret; bitterns; rails; mallard, blue-winged teal, redhead, and ruddy ducks, sedge and marsh wrens, Forster's and black terns, yellow-headed blackbirds, and numerous sandpiper species. Grassland nesting species currently include and savanna sparrows, bobolink, upland sandpiper, dickcissel, and meadowlark. A variety of wetland types (shallow marsh, sedge and wet meadow, mud flats) along with associated grasslands have been created.

During 2003, five wetlands consisting of 352 acres of wetland habitat, along with 100 acres of grassland and wet prairie were planted. The five wetlands were created by constructing 14,800 feet of berms, with the longest being 4,800 feet and the shortest 1,450 feet in length. The wetlands are 134, 101, 57, 48, and 12 acres in size. Due to the wet spring conditions, 200 acres will be planted during the spring of 2005. Prescribed burning was completed on six blocks totaling 460 acres to improve native plantings and control brush seedlings. Exotic and invasive plant species are actively being controlled and monitored on an ongoing basis.



In addition, surveys and management for the federally endangered massasauga have been completed. Breeding bird surveys have been conducted for the last three years to



document the colonization and use by grassland and wetland bird species. The Turtle Valley Wildlife Area also provides outdoor recreation and educational opportunities for all of southeastern Wisconsin.

During 2004, the 459 acres of wetlands were restored into a mosaic of shallow marsh, fresh wet meadow, sedge meadow, low prairie, mud flats and open grassy areas to benefit a variety of wildlife species. Two embankments for hydrologic diversification and numerous tile breaks were completed, along with installation of rip-rap and erosion control matting on several previously constructed berms for increased stability. Native wet mesic plantings will be conducted on about 150 acres during the spring of 2005. In addition, several past planting will be burned to stimulate growth of the natives.